

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DODE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 EB-07

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P 161035Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4795 PRIORITY

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 2229

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, TC
SUBJECT: PROCUREMENT OF M16A1 RIFLES

REF: STATE 198571

1. IN ABSENCE OF GEN. KHALDI WHO OUT OF COUNTRY ON SHORT LEAVE, AMBASSADOR TOOK OPPORTUNITY OF GOODBYE CALL ON UAE DEFENSE FORCE DEPUTY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF (AND ABU DHABI CROWN PRINCE) SHAIKH KHALIFA TO DISCUSS OPTION FOR HANDLING M16A1 PURCHASES OUTLINED REFTTEL. RESPONSE WAS VERY POSITIVE. KHALIFA SAID THAT UAEDF WOULD DEFINITELY LIKE TO TALK TO COLT REP AND EXPLORE WITH HIM TERMS OF WHICH RIFLES MIGHT BE SUPPLIED. HE REITERATED INTEREST IN HAVING REP BRING SOME RIFLES FOR DEMONSTRATION PURPOSES. KHALIFA SAID THAT IF DECISION TAKEN TO PURCHASE FROM COMPANY DIRECTLY, UAEDF WOULD DEFINITELY WANT FMS CONTRACT TO INSPECT WEAPONS AND INSURE QUALITY. LIKewise HE ASKED THAT EMBASSY REP SIT IN ON MEETING WITH COLT REP. (AMBASSADOR AGREED.) IN SHORT, DIFINITE USG INVOLVEMENT DESIRED. ON OTHER HAND, KHALIFA INDICATED THAT IF COMPANY PRICE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN FMS QUOTATION, UAEDF MIGHT REPEAT MIGHT DESICE 15-18 MONTH DELAY.

2. COMMENT: KHALIFA WAS VERY POSITIVE IN TERMS OF WANTING US RIFLE, AND WITH KHALFI LIKewise PREFERRING M16A1 WE HOPE IDEA OF COMPETION WITH GERMAN AND ITALIAN MODELS CAN BE FINESSED. WE LESS OPTIMISTIC, HOWEVER, THAT UAEDF WOULD AGREE, REGARDLESS OF POSSIBLE

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PRICE DIFFERENTIAL, TO WAIT 15-18 MONTHS FOR DELIVERY

VIA FMS. RATHER, IF COLT'S PRICES APPEAR HIGH, THEN
DOOR LIKELY TO BE OPENED TO EUROPEAN COMPETITION.
IN SHORT WE HOPE COLT CAN MAKE GOOD OFFER AND STATE/
DEFENSE IMAGINATIVE CONCEPT OF COMMERCIAL/FMS MIX
CAN BE MADE TO WORK.

3. ACTION REQUESTED: (A) FIRST STEP IS CLEARLY TO ASK
COLT TO SEND REP TO ABU DHABI. KHALIFA SUGGESTED THAT
DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BE WITH KHALDI WHO DUE BACK IN
TEN DAYS TO TWO WEEKS--I.E. IF COLT REP CAN BE HERE
AT END OF AUGUST TIMING SHOULD BE RIGHT. REP SHOULD
BRING WITH HIM DEMONSTRATION MODELS (10-15) OF
M16A1 AND BE PREPARED DISCUSS DELIVERY DATE AND
PRICE FOR 30,000 RIFLES. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE
FIRM ARRIVAL DATE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
(B) PRIOR TO UAEDF-COLT MEETING EMBASSY WILL NEED
ESTIMATE OF COSTS OF POSSIBLE FMS SERVICES -- I.E.
(1) INSPECTION AND (2) MOBILE TRAINING TEAM. KHALIFA
MADE NO MENTION OF DESIRE FOR TRAINING SO IT IS
POSSIBLE UAEDF MAY WISH FOREGO THIS ASPECT FMS SERVICE.
STERNER

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